

THE MESSENGER



OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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J. DAVIS
ARTIST

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA (White Sisters)

ORIGIN AND AIM: The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie, to rescue, moralize and regenerate the pagan and Mohammedan woman, and through her attain the family and society. Exclusively vowed to the Apostolate in Africa, the Sisters devote their lives to the natives in every work of mercy and charity . . . Catechetical, Medical, Educational.

GOVERNMENT AND APPROBATION:

The Congregation is governed by a Superior General who depends directly on the Holy See. The Constitutions were definitely approved by decree the 14th of December 1909 and promulgated on the 3rd of January 1910.

SPIRIT: The Spirit of the Congregation is one of obedience, humility, simplicity, and zeal; and the life of the Sisters one of poverty, mortification and labor.

* * * *

The Congregation numbers over 1,500 Professed Sisters who are devoting their lives to the Natives in 120 Missions, that spread out through—

North Africa: Algeria, Tunisia, Atlas Mountains, Sahara.

West Africa: The Gold Coast, French West Africa.

East Africa: Kenya, Nyassaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, Rwanda, Urundi.

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OUR AMERICAN HOME IS AT:

White Sisters Convent
319 Middlesex Avenue
Metuchen, New Jersey

THE MESSENGER OF

OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES

Three Masses are said monthly for the living and deceased benefactors of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Moreover, they share in the prayers and apostolic labors of over fifteen hundred White Sisters, who are working in the African Missions; and in the prayers and acts of self denial that the Natives, so willingly, offer up daily for their benefactors.

TO AVOID THE MISSIONS UNNECESSARY EXPENSE,

kindly notify us immediately of a change of address. If you do not, the postal authorities will tax us for their notification.

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Thoughts . . . On Christmas Eve

SCHOOL IS OVER, and the laughing little girls run off, calling out their good wishes to Sister as they leave: "Happy Feast, Sister, happy feast!"

What feast is it? What anniversary are we about to celebrate? Do they know, these little Moslem girls, hemmed in as they are by the fanaticism of their creed? For them "Sidna Aissa" Jesus is a **Prophet**. One, less great than Mahomet, nothing more! He is a **Stranger** to those millions of pagans who know nothing of the Author of Creation, and to all that multitude who, this very night, will not catch the Angels' words. . . A very legion who have never learned that the Word is waiting to be born again in those souls who welcome His coming, those souls who during Advent, have prepared for His Coming now so close at hand. "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The mystery of Christmas is the mystery of God coming to us His creatures, that we may go to Him. To the whole world, from pole to pole, the Redeemer would have His message brought. He did not spare Himself in order to bring light to those who were in darkness. He left His throne of glory and the company of Angels to lie in a straw-lined manger,

watched over by two animals. He who inflames the Seraphims had known what it is to tremble with cold. He who ordains the movements of the stars, became a little dependent Child. "Who would not return the love of Him who has loved us so much?"

Is this not enough to light in our hearts a great desire for Him, a great movement towards Him? To make us dream of a conquest that will bring the whole world to His feet; that will bring all nations to worship Him; to inspire in us the wish to add even one little note to the great concert of glory . . . For the Child-God is rich and poor at one and the same time. Poor, because so many souls are separated from Him, so many do not know of His existence, and so many have hidden in the depths of their heart a thirst for the God who created them.

With Faith as their inspiration, the Missionaries went forth to become "Searchers for Souls" to give souls to God and God to souls. This is because one day they themselves had found their hearts filled with Him, that they resolved to live only for others.

Sister M. St. Eucher, W.S.





A Tribute

AT AN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY Wednesday, November 8th, His Excellency the Most Reverend Richard James Cushing was installed Boston's new Archbishop by His Excellency the Most Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States. Not only the faithful of Boston rejoiced, but may we add to this concert of joy, that of the whole Catholic Mission World.

His Excellency never left our beloved Country, but his name is known far and wide, from the igloos of the far North to the huts of the tropics, he is: "The Father of the Missions." We know it to be a title very dear to his great heart. When our Sisters paid the then Bishop Cushing their first visit, after his consecration, he proudly showed them his crozier in the crook of which Our Lady of the Missions was enthroned. And now in His Excellency's first statement after his appointment:

"My love and blessings and prayerful greetings go forth under the Goodness of God to the priests and religious at home, to those serving as chaplains in the training camps or battlefields of the war, to all the faithful, to our young men and women serving in the armed forces and **TO MY MISSIONARY FRIENDS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.**"

We know that His Excellency's plea will also have met with a wholehearted answer from all:

"The first act is to ask all to join with me in fervent prayers to Almighty God. May he inspire and strengthen me. May he grant me light to know His will, guidance to do His work, grace to spread His holy message of faith and love and salvation everywhere, at home and throughout the sorely tried mission fields."

The Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa join their grateful prayers to those of all Missionaries that God may bless His Excellency Archbishop Cushing and make his reign over the great Archdiocese a long and fruitful one, for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

AD MULTOS ANNOS !



**A BLESSED CHRISTMAS
AND
A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
to all the Benefactors and Friends of
Our Lady of Africa Missions.**





How the Days Passed

Sr. M. Irena, W.S.

JUNE 13, 1944: GLORY BE TO GOD. The long awaited day dawns at last. I am surprised to find that I slept all night despite the prospect of a trip to Africa. We have Mass at the Sisters of Mercy Convent, with the following intention announced by the good Father Opdenaker: "That the Holy Ghost may grant to the White Sisters special Missionary graces." We are deeply touched at the thoughtfulness of Father, and very grateful for this delicate attention. Mass and Communion are more fervent than ever, each Sister no doubt renewing in her heart the sacrifice of home, life and country for the greater glory of God and the salvation of heathen souls. There hovers over the little chapel a silent hush, each one deeply recollected, conscious of the impending departure, taking advantage of the intimate presence of Our Lord to express her utter abandonment and total confidence in His Divine Providence and Merciful Love. It is in the Heart of Jesus that the Missionary draws strength and courage to carry through.

Mass over, the Mercy Sisters, always our good friends, receive us at parlor to extend their good wishes and bid us a fond "adieu" with the assurance that their thoughts and prayers will accompany us throughout the journey. Father then gives

us a last blessing. The solemn "Itinerary prayers" we had yesterday in our little Chapel.

After a hurried but substantial breakfast, there are yet many details to attend to. By 10:30 all is settled. The last farewells at Metuchen are very warm and cordial, with promises of mutual prayers. The remaining Sisters are most envious . . . how they too desire to set out for Africa! We drive off, two full cars, happy to be able to make the two hour trip to Philadelphia by auto, thanks to the kindness of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and Charity Sisters at the Hospital, who let us have their cars, driven one by a Brother and the other by our faithful "John." Metuchen is "home" to me, and in my heart will be lasting fond memories of happy moments spent there. Goodbye to our beloved Mother Theodora.

It is the feast of our good friend, St. Anthony, and we ask him to lead us safely across to Lisbon, which is incidentally his birthplace. Our dear Mother Loretta, who accompanies us to Philadelphia, fortunately has the inspiration to seek the Postmaster on his morning rounds in case there should be letters for the departing Sisters. We scan several streets until we find him. He kindly gives us our mail, happily for

(Please turn to page 118)

THE MISSIONS MARCO

RWANDA-URUNDI

AT THE NOVITIATE of Save in Rwanda, there are actually twenty-nine novices and sixty postulants, of whom some are pursuing their studies at the Normal School. Already we have quite a number of Native Sisters in this Vicarate. This year two new mission foundations are planned and will be confided to them.

Here we hardly know about the war, however our people have their own grim battle to fight. Famine is raging throughout the country and has claimed a great number of victims.

In Urundi there is no famine, but the people have suffered from dearth of the necessaries of life for a long time. Besides there is an epidemic raging, many have died, a White Father also has succumbed to it.

Sister M. Peter Damian, W.S.

All good wishes to "Our Lady of Fatima" a new publication maintained by and in the interest of the missions. May it prosper, and congratulations to Reverend F. A. Kaiser, the Editor, Diocesan Director from the Propagation of the Faith, Belleville, Ill.

CILUBULA, NORTH RHODESIA

We have one hundred boarders and sixty-five day pupils, all doing very nicely. During these war days it is difficult to provide food and clothing for these little folks. We trust in St. Joseph who will provide.

Many useful items are missing: thread, cotton, needles, buttons, etc. We darned our cotton stockings with colored wool, makes them look like geography maps. The Sanctuary Lamp was broken, we had to replace it by an ink well. Even the dear Lord must share our poverty.

KISA, TANGANYIKA

At present it is rather hot, unusual for this time of the year. However heavy rains are not very welcome either,



The "Algiers-Cervantes Eye C
November 1942 has been reopened
name was changed to "Algiers-St.
of Pathmos and her five companion

RCH ON



"St. John's Eye Clinic" destroyed by bombing in
reopened in the course of this year. Its
"St. John's" in memory of Mother John
companions, victims of the fatal raid.

as our house is not waterproof, as beautiful as it may appear from outside.

More than once already we have slept under the umbrella. Very romantic is it not? In the Chapel it is worse still. A heavy rain surprised us making the Stations, and the only way out was to evacuate and finish up in the Sacristy. And we are not likely to get another roof in the near future. But what is this compared to all those poor families bombed out of their homes! Despite our present inconvenience we can but thank God for having spared us so big trials.

Sister M. Friedburga, W.S.

WEST AFRICA

The first Native Dagari Priest was ordained at Dissin in the very midst of the Jungle, on April 29th. Despite the hardships of travel, three Bishops and thirty missionary Priests were gathered for the occasion. There were representatives from the civil authorities, the various mission schools, Major and Minor Seminarists and Dagaris come from all the region.

The following day Father Emmanuel sang his first high mass in God's great church of the open, with the sky as a vaulted roof. The functions of assisting Priest, Deacon and Sub-Deacon were all filled by members of the 1942 ordination.

On May 2nd, Dano, another great center of Dagari had its turn in celebrating the first priest of their race.

Mother Yves-Marie wrote that for the first time in the history of the White Sisters' Convent, the two parlors became Chapels where four altars were erected. They had the privilege of having eleven Masses at home: those of two Bishops and nine Priests.

Enthusiasm rang high at the first celebration of the kind! The two native Sisters who had come from Ouagadougou for the occasion created quite a sensation. (One was the very own sister of Father Emmanuel.)

There was quite a little incident when the truck taking the visitors back to Ouagadougou was ready to leave. All the girls wanted to go to become nuns,—even those already engaged to our good Catechists. Three of them already had their bags and baggages loaded on the truck and there were not few tears when it had to be taken down. Mother Superior adds: "For the latter the incident is nearly forgotten now, but among our school girls the visit of these dear little Sisters has made quite an impression, and surely was a revelation.

How The Days Passed

(Continued from page 115)

us as there are several letters for the Sisters and one from Washington, which as is proven later in the day, has to be produced several times among our papers. The Sisters are in high spirit and burst



Sister M. Irena

forth into praises of Our Lady: "Ave Maris Stella, Salve Regina" and hymns to Our Lady of Africa. . .

All goes well except for a delay caused by a flat tire on the second car. The autos are separated unknown to the first, and a kind truck-driver trails behind us several miles to tell us of the mishap of the other car. We turn back and finally find them. The Sisters are promenading on a porch, where a good lady has invited them to take shelter until the car is put into order again. We set off once more, and at about 12:30 we sight the pier. There is the "Serpa Pinto" waiting for us, our joy is complete. We have time for a picnic lunch, including hot dogs, fruits, ice cream and the delicious cookies which you sent.

The crucial moment arrives, which we all more or less fear, - examination of papers - will there be anything missing? The authorities are extremely kind, and

although the process is a bit tedious, everything seems to be in order. Mother Loretta who is allowed to come in with us, in her heart no doubt heaves a sigh of relief to know that at last she can see us set foot on the boat. All these past weeks, hers has been a great responsibility, and we are so grateful for all she has done. Let us hope she can now get a well deserved rest. How she has worked for these papers. We bid a fond and appreciative farewell. She shall not be forgotten. A good natured Irishman makes short work of O.K.'ing our luggage without further ado, we board the boat around 2:30, then more formalities. While waiting, the authorities chat with us in English, here are gleanings gathered here and there. There are eighty-five missionaries on board, all Protestant—30 Ministers included. Of the 220 passengers, more than half of them constitute the missionaries and their families.

We have a ray of hope when one of the gentlemen says that he believes there is a Catholic Priest on board. Our joy is short-lived when it is proved otherwise. We proceed to the other side for examination of papers by the American naval authorities. At the Purser's Window I struggle for about twenty minutes with passport and papers, trying to interpret for Mother in English, having the hardest time to make myself understood, when I discover that the aforesaid gentleman speaks French fluently. Just one of those little incidents.

3:30 P.M: We are finally showed to our cabins at one end of the ship, two adjoining cabins of four, and one of three at the opposite end. The boat is not very large, but quite comfortable, especially as we are fortunate enough to have first class accommodations. It is sturdy looking however, and a sufficiently large promenade deck.

The officers and stewards are extremely kind and courteous, but our conversations are a real comedy. Most of them are Portuguese, and speak but little or no English, although a few of them seem to have a limited knowledge, we try first English, then French, a few signs, finally they lapse into Portuguese or Spanish which we are able to grasp a little. It's really too funny for words, but we get

along nicely anyhow. The stewards seem timid because of language difficulty, but they are otherwise so polite and anxious to please. I believe most of the employees to be Catholic, and one of the officers anxious to show us the little Chapel on board, produces the key and proudly opens it up for us. It looks very devotional, but alas, no Chaplain.

6 o'clock: and no sign of the boat leaving. No other boats around. This isn't certainly New York harbor, teeming with life. It is prayer time, and we enjoy a restful period with Our Dear Lord. How sweet to commune to Him after a trying day.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14th—6:15 A. M.:

The American Naval authorities go ashore and the "Serpa Pinto" quietly slips out of the dock, sailing down the Delaware River. At last we're on our way. "Mary, Star of the Sea, be our guide." We are installed on deck and watch with interest the picturesque scenery as we glide past the river banks. The "San Miguel" slips past us, just arriving from Portugal. She gets a fraternal greeting from our boat. At the mouth of the river, the last American officer leaves the boat with the river pilot, and in the early afternoon, the American coast-line slowly fades away from our view. The well beloved "Stars and Stripes" are taken down from the topmost mast, and we are now in full ocean. . . On to Africa. . . Goodbye America, beloved land of my birth, where are left behind all those I hold most dear, all of you, my dearest family, and all that I ever cherished. On to Africa where God and souls are calling, where my new home will be. There is a little tightening of the heartstrings, but Christ, the Divine Missioner, and His Blessed Mother are with us to lead us on. Peace and joy fill my heart. I recall one of the favorite phrases of St. Francis of Assisi: "Heaven and earth hold nothing dear to me, O Lord, when I behold Thy love. . ." True the love of God encompasses His poor little spouses like a shield, and with Christ beside us, what more can the little Missionaries desire. "Mary lead thy children on."

Surprise at luncheon this noon. On our plate, peeping out of a corner of the napkin, we perceive the emblem and motto of Our Venerable Founder, the familiar "Pelican and Caritas" as appropriate spiritual bouquet with a tiny relic of our

saintly Founder, thrust into the beak of the bird, and an inspiring thought inside the folder. A little handpainted souvenir from one of our thoughtful Sisters of Levis. How we enjoy it, makes us feel right at home, recalling a Convent feast-day.

We are at the long "table d'hôte" right in the center of the dining-room, just below the musicians' balcony, an open spectacle to angels and men. The table is directly beneath the domed ceiling, with double balconies, one above the other, encircling us all around. Nuns are somewhat a novelty to the passengers, and we are politely stared at. By to-morrow, they will have gotten used to us. Need I say that of course we are on our very best behavior. The service and the food are excellent. How we long to share all this with our poor soldiers at the front, and with all the half-starved families.

Mother makes a little order of day for us so that we can follow our religious exercises with a little precision and not feel too lost without our Convent life. There is time for prayer, silence, siesta, recreation, promenade and much free time, which is usefully employed in reading or writing. After meals we congregate in Mother's room, 108, for a short get-together.

Throughout the day, Mother is busy separating us in small groups. We have a knack of gathering together, and although we try to disappear and make ourselves inconspicuous, we seem to loom up like an army at every turn. Due to the fact that the boat is rather small, we can't seem to efface ourselves, and instead of eleven we look like three dozen. The American missionaries are timidly aloof, which is quite different from the confident friendliness in our Catholic parishes.

Just before the evening meal, Sr. Jean de la Passion succumbs as first victim to the rolling sea. On my way to the cabin, I come upon three Sisters and a steward in a huddle, excitedly bending over a Spanish-English dictionary, everybody talking at once, trying to find a very much needed word. It is comical but we think the steward quite clever to produce a dictionary. Dinner over, some of us begin to feel queer. This rolling is something new, and the mal-de-mer business respects neither age, nor religion, and drops in uninvited. Evening prayers and so to bed.

(To be continued)

A DISASTER

SOME TIME AGO the Native Sisters Novitiate was moved from Mbulu to Bussongo. I was there recently and I must relate to you the story of their great disaster.

It happened at the beginning of October '43. The Novitiate was nearly complete, a lovely big building, the Brother had just finished thatching the roof, (for it is impossible to get corrugated iron now,) he told the workmen to clean up a bit, but on no account to burn the rubbish because it was too windy. Then for the first time since he had begun to build, the Brother went to make the siesta, for he had an attack of fever.

Suddenly he heard z-z-z-z, he looked out of the window and saw the thatched roof in flames. In less than an hour nothing remained but the blackened ruins of the Novitiate and the out-houses. You can just imagine the feelings of the poor old Brother. Months and months of work destroyed in a few minutes. . . A workman, had, in spite of orders, set fire to the heap of rubbish, a whirlwind arose and in no time the fire was carried up on to the roof.

Native Sisters, Novices and Postulants, men, women and children tried their best to fight the flames, but all in vain. They turned their activities in another direction. When the fire had burnt itself out, women went off quickly to cut more grass for a new roof, while the men stood guard over smoldering beams. The next morning help came from all sides, men and boys began to clear up the debris, while women and girls brought fresh straw. It happened that I was there only a few days later, but the reconstruction was on its way.

The Sisters were very much touched by the devotedness of the Natives. The greatest loss however was the wood, for it is impossible to get it at Bussongo, fresh supplies had to be brought nearly eighty miles by lorry from Tabora.

Wooden beams are very dear now and transport is dearer still so you can imagine what a great loss it is for the Mission, but God works everything for the best.

Mother M. John Fisher, W. S.
on Mission at Tabora.

OBITUARY

Reverend G. Ceysens, Galetto, G. de Scorbiac, A. Briand, Ramsel; Brothers Tuponey, Freibruger, Anolidus, Remis, Dalle, all members of the Society of the White Fathers.

Sister M. Thomas, Sister of Mercy.

Sister M. Juliette, W. S.

Sister M. Edmond, W. S.

Joseph Alexander Wiencek, Clinton, Mass., Killed in Action.

Robert E. Howell, Metuchen, N. J. Killed in Action.

Mr. T. Dooley, Perth Amboy, N. J.

All who died in this war.

R. I. P.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RANSOMED PAGAN BABIES

Mrs. L. J. Martel.
Miss M. J. Halwell.
Miss J. Meyer.
St. Scholastica Academy, Chicago, Ill.
St. Mary School, Lee, Mass.
Sacred Heart School, Worcester, Mass.
Jane Moynagh.
Mary Meehan.
Mrs. U. Thelen.
The Jakubowicz Children.

HELPED TO SUPPORT THE LEPERS

Mrs. A. Yale.
Mrs. J. Donnelly.
C. N. D. Breckenridge.

TO KEEP A SANCTUARY LAMP BURNING

Mrs. J. B. Burns.
Miss F. Kulpa.
Miss S. Polewarczyk.
Mrs. Jakubowicz.
Miss R. Deveau.
Mrs. Moriseau.
Mrs. Lemieux.

PROVIDED BREAD FOR THE ORPHANS

Miss M. A. Monaghan
Miss M. M. Santori.



In the name of the Banabikira of Uganda we thank:

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart, Metuchen, New Jersey

and

Sister Anna-Louise, O. P., from North Cambridge, Mass.

for answering our appeal for sets of "New practical Meditation for Everyday" (in English) by Reverend Bruno Verduysee, S. J.

We should be very grateful for more of these books, which we would gladly forward on. You may address them to:

Reverend Mother Superior
White Sisters Convent
319 Middlesex Avenue
Metuchen, New Jersey

**THE WHITE SISTERS ARE IN AMERICA—
AND THEY ARE HERE FOR ONE PURPOSE—
TO RECRUIT AMERICAN GIRLS
FOR THE
AFRICAN MISSIONS OF THE WHITE SISTERS.**

They have a job ready for every girl who would offer herself to them. They come to America and they call to the American girl now more than ever. They see the American nurses and the Women's Auxiliary Corps in North Africa, they witness the job they are doing.

Because of this, they are sure that the American girls can do the work assigned to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (the White Sisters). For this reason they have a postulate in the Diocese of Trenton, at Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, New Jersey.

Any young girl between eighteen and thirty-three who is interested may write, for further information, to:

Reverend Mother Superior
White Sisters Convent
Metuchen, New Jersey.

WILL

Our Legal Title Is

**THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA
METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY**

Don't forget the missions in your WILL! You will never regret it, now or later. Why not include this clause?

"I hereby bequeath to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa for use in their African Missions, the sum of Dollars."



The Bond you buy over
here—may save a life
over there!

★ BUY BONDS ★



"GIVE US this day our DAILY BREAD" is the cry that rises from Christian and pagan famine stricken centres of Africa.

The Generosity Of Our American Friends Is The Hope Of Starving Africa

Without seeing there is no believing what famine means. In the interior sections of Africa, far re-

moved from communication with the coast, famine is raging and is taking thousands of lives.

The Sisters, children and all pray for their "daily Bread" and have confidence that our dear and generous benefactors will help as in the past.

The Christ Child will reward THOSE who help HIS POOR AND HUNGRY.

My share to the FAMINE STRICKEN is

Name

Street

City

Zone

State

★ WAR BONDS ARE ACCEPTED ★

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